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McNAGHTEN, TUNIS.
17TH OHIO VOLUNTEER
INFANTRY, CIVIL WAR

17th Ohio Volunteer Infantry

Civil War

Allen County Public Library
900 Webster Street
PO Box 2270
Fort Wayne, IN 46801-2270

Tunis McNaghten was my great grandfather, and although this speech was given at Logan Ohio not many years before he died, I know from other family papers it was not the first time it was given.

He was always asked to speak at Memorial Day Ceremonies - which always included a speech, or two, a parade to the Cemetery and more speeches before a picnic.

He was very active in all Encampments of The 17th OVI and considered his participation one of the greatest contributions to society in his life - (And I think he enjoyed almost every

2.
minute of it. He lost many
cousins, and a brother. He
had traveled to Mississippi
to take care of him, but
finding him already dead
and buried returned to Ohio,
and joined the 17th with
several of his other young
cousins.

His grandfather had come
to Ohio from Pennsylvania
early in 1800. Patented his
land, and continued to raise
his family. John's wife had
been one of the white women
redeemed by Col. Henry Baugust
in 1863-1864.

Hope you enjoy this personal
account. - and am sorry the
pen didn't work perfectly.

Sincerely
Eleanor Shorting

Delivered at Logan O. Sep. 18th 1904

James M. McNaughten

The Campaign of Atlanta began early in 1864. After the Battle of Mission Ridge, Grant being was promoted to Lieutenant General and assumed command personally of the Eastern Army. And Gen. Sherman ~~being~~ ^{was} in command of all the forces operating in ~~the~~ ^{the} Georgia and Alabama.

While Grant was to march upon the Confederate Capital with a powerful army - Gen. Sherman with the forces operating in the West ^{concentrating} at Ringgold Georgia; was to march upon and capture the once beautiful City of Atlanta Georgia. The preparation for this Campaign commenced early in the Spring of 1864 - when the 71st regiments whose members had recruited and enjoyed a 30 day furlough - returned to their commands with their hitherto depleted ranks filled with recruits - in some instances to the full quota of a Regiment -

When we consider that a single line of Railway from Cincinnati to Chattanooga, a distance of 400 miles, was the only means of transportation of troops and the supplies and munitions of war necessary to equip and maintain an Army of 125,000 men - and that that Railway had to be guarded at

at nearly every point. We will at once see that a wonderful problem confronted "Uncle Billy Sherman".

But with that keen foresight always present ~~in~~ with General Sherman and the master Military Genius always displayed by him, all questions were met and difficulties overcome. And by way. The 1st he was ready with an Army of more than 100,000 men. Consisting of the 4th 14th 15th 16th 17th 20th & 23rd Corps. To begin a campaign which was not to end until Gen Johnson should be driven beyond the Garden City of the South. He was to be supported in this wonderful undertaking by Gen as "Old Pap" Thomas. McPherson. Sherman. Joe Hooker. Logan. Howard. Stocum. Schofield and others.

Let us now go back - in this brief review and confine ourselves to those operations and incidents in which the 1st Brigade under Gen Turchin bore a conspicuous part.

March 12th 1864. after a brief furlough joined the Brigade and camped on the hill west of and near Ringgold, Georgia. Here we pitched our dog tents and settled down once more to a strict army life. While here considerable time was spent in drilling and training ourselves for an active campaign life - which was soon to commence.

the 1st
Regiment

was
2
1
4

March the 22d we were visited by
a snow storm which covered the
mountains and Hills of Northern Georgia
with 8 inches of snow - and when
I tell you that many times during
the day and night ~~we were compelled~~
for the storm lasted about 24
hours we were compelled to get
out and shovel the snow off of and
away from the frail structures
we called tents our only shelter
from the blinding and driving
snow. You will not wonder
nor think it strange that a boy
just 18 years old - and who had
been in the service less than a
month thought frequently of the
pleasant home and comforts of
the firesides of the Northern homes -

While in Camp at Ringgold
an epidemic of Smallpox visited
our Camp - and notwithstanding
all were compelled to undergo
vaccinations. Many fell victims of
the dread disease. Srgt H. H. Berry
and W. F. yton of Co. B. being among
the number -

Here we had a ^{change} shifting of
Regimental commanders. Ward
who was wounded at Chickamauga
returning to the Command of the Regt.
and Maj. Stinchcomb who had commanded
since Chickamauga Resigning.

4

Capt B. H. Showers of G was Promoted
to Lieut Col and Willis G. Black formerly
of Co B. was promoted to Major.
May the 6th we recd orders to
be ready at 6 o'clock in the morning
to march - with 3 days cooked rations
and 60 rounds of ammunition -

Let some of you may not
know and realize what that meant
to every soldier, I will state that
each of us carried his own household
goods and clothing - which usually
consisted of Gun Cartridge box, Ragout
and Scotland Knapsack in which
was usually found - dog tent, woollen
Blanket, rubber Blanket, shoe chamois
of clothing as was thought necessary.
Writing Material, frequently Photograph
album, and many other little trinkets.
Also Canteen & Haversack, Tin Cup
and frying pan or Coffee pot -
and with 3 days rations and 60 rounds
of ammunition each of us carried -
about 40 lbs -

The night before we began
the Campaign every soldier busied
himself in packing up - and
getting ready for active operations
which was to begin in the morning.

The morning of the 7th dawned
upon us bright and beautiful
but gave promise of a very Warm
day -

We left Camp about 8 o'clock - and
marched as far as Tunnel Hill - a distance
for the day of about 10 miles - where we
camped for the night -

The line of march on the 2d day
was one never to be forgotten -

The roadway for miles was strewn
with discarded clothing - Blankets,
Overcoats - tents. In fact after the
first day's march our boys carried
no surplus - or superfluous baggage.
May 10th The rebels shelled our
camp from Rocky faced Ridge - which
was the first serious trouble we had
encountered -

On the 14th of May about
noon occurred the famous and too
disastrous battle of Resacca -

The scenes of that eventful day
are as fresh in my mind as the
day on which they were enacted -

First came two lines of men
going to the front, then came
the hurried order of the Command:
"Attention - fix bayonets - forward
march!" And on we went through
the woods to another field and
in full view of the rebel fortification
and after clearing the fence - halting
just long enough to dress the line
the order was given - double - quick -
charge - and on, and on, we went
through one of the fiercest and deadly

fires of shot and shell, that was even encountered by men, until we reached the ravine - when we could go no further and was forced to seek shelter under cover of the banks - until such time as it was considered safe - to risk going back, a few at a time, to the woods - where we ~~again~~ were enabled to reform our lines -

The assault on other parts of the line was more successful, and on the night of May - 15th the Rebels - evacuated Resacca and were during the next two days - driven step by step through Calloway - Kingston - across the Etowah River - through Dallas - Burnt Hickory - Pumpkin Vine Creek - Uchworth - Big Shanty - and to the outer fortifications of Kennesaw Mountain where we encountered them on the 16th of June - the battle lasting until after dark. The casualties were just as we fought from behind rudely constructed works -

The aim of our Brigade was so well directed, and the fire so steady and effective, that the rebels considered it unsafe to retreat until under cover of the darkness - when they retreated to Kennesaw Mountain. Our first position at Kennesaw was - on the west side and about 1/2 of a mile from base of the Mountain -

We could plainly see the rebels walking about on the tops of the mountain - but nothing alarming occurred - until about the 21st of June when they got their artillery in position on the mountain - when at times they made it very warm as to speak for us - Well do I remember when the Regimental colors was planted on the works flaunting defiance to the rebel arms - They gave us such a shelling as we had not experienced - since Resaca's famous day.

Some one suggested that if the Colors were taken down possibly it might stop their firing - to which Col Ward said No - By the Gods, where the American flag is once planted there it must remain.

Soon after this we moved our position going a short distance to the right and into works already constructed. This was in an open field in full view and in reach of the rebel rifle range.

This was undoubtedly the worst position occupied by our Regt for any length of time during the campaign.

Here we were exposed to a destructive and continuous fire of the enemy.

and on account of their altitude above us, we were unable to reach them they being on top of Kenesaw Mountain but they looking down into our camp - could fire upon us with accurate aim and disastrous results.

Here boys you will remember we
 had to dig trenches and cover them
 over so that we might go unnoticed
 by them from one Co to another and
 back to the woods where we could
 get water and where also we did
 our working - ~~and~~
 and when one of our boys fastened his
 Blouse and hat on a stick and
 slowly raised it ^{above} the works
 representing a man in the act of
 looking over the ~~works~~ ^{works}. And hardly
 had been exposed to view when
 a Minnie Ball pierced it through
 through. Here we remained until
 Gen Sherman with one of those strokes
 of Master Military genius moved to the
 right compelling them to evacuate
 their almost impregnable position and
 fall back across the Chattahoochee River.
 July 13th the troops on the Extreme
 left crossed the Chattahoochee River - and
 not wishing to risk ^{an engagement} the rebels retreated
 in the direction of Atlanta. But on the
 22d of July after Johnson had been
 relieved of the Command and the dashing
 and daring Hood took control. They
 attacked the Army of the Tennessee and
 for a time it seemed that victory
 would crown their efforts - but the
 fate of the day finally changed
 and what at one time promised
 the rebel General Hood a victory was turned
 into a bitter and galling defeat.

The We lost in that battle many noble
men - and among the number was
that gallant Gen. McPherson who was
the pride of the Army of the Tennessee.

July 20th we moved to Davis
when we were in direct range of
the large siege guns of Atlanta -
Here you will remember we
were continuously annoyed by their
sending solid shot & shell into
our camp - not caring either where
they dropped them. Hearing the
report of their big gun across one
heid himself to the works. And once
I remember they landed a 10 inch
cannon shell - in the midst of Co B's
quarters. but fortunately it did not
explode - but went bounding across
the hollow landing on the opposite
Hill and in less time than it takes
to tell it there were at least fifty
men around it - all eager to make
careful examination of it - and it
soon became necessary to place a
guard over it until it could be
buried out of reach lest some thought
less boy should strike it on the head
and cause havoc in camp -

We remained here until about the
3d of August when we moved to the extreme
right of the Army and on the 5th
attempting to swing forward so as to
straighten the line - we halted in the woods
almost in sight of the rebel line. and

began to fortify our position. but were
 work attracted the attention and drew the fire
 of the rebel batteries, and they poured
 such a volley of shot and shell into
 our camp that it was hazardous even
 to work in the trenches.

It occurred to me that some of
 the boys were more anxious to work and
 worked more faithfully than I saw they
 were ever known to work before and
 possibly since. Among the losses of
 that day was Lieut Symon W. Barnes
 of Co K who was struck by a fragment
 of a shell which exploded almost directly
 over our head. Boys do you all
 remember that place. - Aug 8th we moved
 to the left of our Division and relieved the
 31st Ohio - going into the muddy trenches
 after dark and when fairly settled Col
 Ward passed along down the line - when
 in Co B's quarters he fell in the mud
 jumping immediately to his feet. he said
 By the Gods boys if you ever tell this
 on me I'll deny it.

Notwithstanding the 31st lost heavily -
 here ^{the day before} nothing of a serious nature happened
 to us except the death of that noble young
 man Adjt of M. Ruffner. From whom
 no finer man and better soldier ever
 wore the Blue. His death occurred in
 the following manner - After partaking
 of a hearty supper - he with the other

About 300 Yds in front of our
works was our picket or skirmish line.
Some distance in advance of this skir-
-mish line was our vidette picket
line - and these videttes were in hearing
distance and in sight of the rebel vidette.

During the night the war paint was
on and it was unsafe to make even your
whereabouts known - but when morning
came - some one would say hello Johnny
or coming from the other side Hello York
are you going to shoot today - and the
answer would be not unless you do - and
then and there an agreement would be made
that would enable the boys of the blue
and the gray to meet between the line -
visit each other play cards - exchange
commodities and have a good time.
And to the everlasting credit of both sides
the truce agreed upon was never
violated by either.

Here we were at the time the
flank movement was made which re-
sulted in the fight of Jonesborough and
capture of Atlanta - Aug 28th. This
movement commenced by the 20th Corps
moving back to and across the Chattahoochee
River in a fortified position -

The 26th saw the army of the Tennessee
moving to the right, and the same
evening we had orders to pack up - and
strike tents as soon as it was dark.
Sometime in the night while awaiting our
turn to move we heard the Battery going
through the woods in our rear.

but the rebels also heard it and opened
up their batteries and we recd such a
shelling as we had not had for days
before. Our battery was hurried back
in position and replied to them in
such a manner that their guns were
silenced and thus the rebels were convinced
that we were still there.

Our Battery was then moved and
moved more cautiously out of the woods
about 2 o'clock in the morning. In
the morning following soon after and for
three days and nights more we on
the move. And positively the men be-
came so worn out by fatigue and want
of sleep that whenever we would
halt for a few moments only. Many of
the boys would fall asleep. And it
finally became necessary to appoint certain
ones whose duty it was to look after
the men and see that all were in
line when again starting.

This was the condition of our
men when they went into the Jonesborough
fight. Our Post furnished the kitchen
during the day and when the final charge
came we were placed on the 2d line -
or Reserve. Long and anxiously did we
await the signal guns of Logan which
was to be notice that all was ready.

The charge finally was made and
the line in our immediate front was
repulsed and driven back and the 17th Ohio
was ordered to fill the gap in the field not
expecting ever to see them again. Marched

right
 to the about the length of the Regt. Then
 faced to the left. but had not gone far
 until the Div Adjt Gen. Ordered us back
 to our place on the 2d line - Col-
 Ward being somewhat ~~disappointed~~
 disappointed - Iaid by the side of the
 1st Brigade had won glory - of that
 kind several times and went back on
 the 2d line without much fault finding.
 A Minnesota Regt from 3d line - was
 thrust into the gap, carried the works
 captured a battery, using the guns
 not dismantled on the enemy to good
 effect - In passing over the works a
 short time after we found they had
 had a hand to hand encounter -
 clubbing muskets and using the bayonet
 frequently before being able to capture
 the battery - The loss in our Div alone
 that day was 3,500 killed & wounded -
 The rebels retreated ~~in this~~ beyond
 Lovejoy Station where another fight
 occurred our men capturing this time
 many prisoners - This ended the fighting
 of the Atlanta campaign - Sep 2nd we
 busied ourselves in caring for the wounded
 and burying the dead. and on the 6th
 marched back in the direction of Atlanta
 which had been evacuated the night
 after the Jonesborough fight.
 Thus ended a campaign of 121 days
 of the most arduous and constant marching
 and fighting. not a day of which -

but that somewhere on the line there was skirmishing and fighting or maneuvering for position - In our various marches we marched about 250 miles driving the enemy step by step from one position to another until he was finally compelled to give up the ^(CAMPDEN) Garden City of the South.

The Confederate Gen. Johnson, was a Military Genius indeed - having been raised in the South - he had so carefully studied its topography that he was so familiar with all of its numerous military positions that when compelled to leave or evacuate one stronghold, he had another selected and fortified ready to move into. Thus did he oppose the careful but steady advance of Gen Sherman he was driven back & back until almost in sight of Atlanta. And when amidst its towering spires he was relieved by the dashing Gen Hood - whom and his army Sherman outmaneuvered at every point - and it was not long until he was compelled to evacuate the City.

This Campaign cost less and accomplished more good for the Union Cause than any other Campaign during the War. And it can be said too that it was a Campaign without a backward step or a reversal of any considerable consequence -

In Conclusion Allow me to say that the Army marched back to ~~near~~ Atlanta

And once more pitched our tents in
 regular order, and, settled down for a
 quiet rest which we enjoyed for about
 4 weeks. Here we were at the time of
 the Ohio October election. And at the time of the
 Presidential election, we were at Kingston Georgia.
 But, having this article already
 too lengthy, I will close by thanking you Ladies
 & Gentlemen for the cordial manner
 in which you have listened to this
 brief sketch of one of the most wonderful
 campaigns in American History.

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